

Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea

From:

First published:

3 February 2017

Part of:

Mr Simon Smith CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea.

Mr Simon Smith CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea in succession to Mr Charles Hay MVO, who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Smith will take up his appointment during March 2018.

Curriculum Vitae

Full name Simon John Meredith Smith CMG

Married to Sian Rosemary Stickings MBE

Children Two daughters

2016 – present Language training (Korean)

2015 – 2016 FCO, Leader, Review of Buildings Security

2012 – 2015 Kyiv, Her Majesty's Ambassador

2007 – 2012 Vienna, Her Majesty's Ambassador & UK Permanent Representative to the UN

2004 – 2007 FCO, Director, Russia, South Caucasus and Central Asia Directorate /Head of Eastern Department

2002 – 2004 FCO, Head of North East Asia & Pacific Department

1998 – 2002 Moscow, Counsellor (Economic/Commercial)

1997 – 1998 Language training (Russian)

1995 – 1997 FCO, Deputy Head of Southern Europe Department

1994 – 1995 FCO, Speechwriter to the Foreign Secretary

1992 – 1994 FCO, Head of Nuclear Policy Section, Security Policy Department

1989 – 1992 Tokyo, Second Secretary, later First Secretary

1987 – 1989 Language training (Japanese)

1986 – 1987 FCO, Assistant Desk Officer, East Africa Department

1986 Joined FCO

1981 – 1986 Department of Employment

Further information

[Press release: Major upgrade to Leeds junction gets underway](#)

As part of the £8.3 million scheme Highways England will be widening some of the approaches to the M1 roundabout and adding an extra lane to sections of the roundabout itself, increasing it from 2 to 3 lanes.

Most of the work for the 30 week scheme will be carried out during the day. However, some overnight closures will be required with the first taking place tonight, Thursday 2 until Saturday 4 February between 7pm and 6am.

During the overnight closures the M1 southbound carriageway between junctions 46 and 44, and all the approaches to the M1 junction 45 roundabout will be closed so narrow lanes can be installed. While the scheme is ongoing there will also be a reduced speed limit of 50mph on the M1 and a 30mph limit on the slip roads and roundabout.

Highways England project manager Derek Dobinson said:

We are investing more than £15 billion in over 100 schemes across England that will enhance, renew and improve the network. We recognise that this is an important junction which serves a major route into Leeds city centre and is the main access for a number of major businesses and that is why we are investing £8.3 million to improve it.

This scheme, once complete, will improve capacity, reduce congestion and improve the safety for drivers. Predominantly work will be carried out during the day during off peak hours but they may be the occasional overnight closure of the slip roads and the M1.

As well as carrying out improvements to the roundabout, new traffic signal crossings, and improved cycle and pedestrian routes will be installed.

Further information can be [found on the scheme website](#).

Similar improvements have recently been completed at junction 26 of the M62 where it meets the M606. The extra lane was opened to traffic back in December around Chain Bar roundabout and the new traffic signals were installed this month.

Over the next few weeks, contractors will be taking down the old traffic

signals and completing the landscaping and pedestrian and cycle route work. These will be carried out at night when traffic levels are at their lowest.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Heineken paying £160,000 over pollution incident](#)

From:

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The Environment Agency has accepted an enforcement undertaking from a major brewer following a pollution incident on a Herefordshire Brook.

The Environment Agency has accepted an offer of £160,000 for an enforcement undertaking from brewer Heineken UK following a pollution incident at their cider factory in Hereford, which saw several thousand fish killed.

Heineken have also paid more than £12,000 to cover the Environment Agency's legal costs.

The incident, at their Bulmer's cider plant in August 2014, was caused when a container of ammonia-contaminated water was emptied to a surface water drain which connected to the Widemarsh Brook.

At the time it was estimated that between 2,000 and 3,000 fish were killed including bullhead, minnows, juvenile chub & dace.

Environment Agency spokesperson Dave Throup said:

It's very unfortunate that a significant pollution of one of Hereford's main watercourses happened as a result of Heineken's actions.

However, we are pleased that the company is planning to make a positive contribution to the county's environment by offering this enforcement undertaking.

As a result of the enforcement undertaking, £150,000 will go to the Wye & Usk foundation and £10,000 to Yazor Widemarsh & Eign Brook restoration project.

[Green Party: Government disability benefit cuts foster prejudice against disabled people](#)



Green Party

3 February 2017

*** Jonathan Bartley, co-leader: Government policy based on false idea that sick and disabled are guilty until proven innocent**

The Green Party has condemned Government plans [1] to cut disability unemployment benefit in a bid to get more disabled people into work.

Jonathan Bartley, who co-leads the Green Party as a job share so he can care for his disabled son Samuel, said:

“These cuts are illogical, based on a false premise and clearly pernicious. Cutting a benefit designed to support sick and disabled people into employment, is no way to help them into work.

“Those at the receiving end are those that even the Government accepts are sick and disabled. But these cuts will drastically reduce the quality of life for many disabled people and is tantamount to kicking people when they are down.

“Government policy is increasingly based on the false idea that the sick and disabled are guilty until proven innocent, and that if they can be beaten hard enough by a weaponised welfare state they will be forced to find work.

“The Government should instead be focusing on removing the real barriers to

finding work. This includes more support, not less, and working with employers to ensure that the world of work is accessible in every way through practices such as flexible working. It should also include tackling the widespread prejudice against disabled people which the Government is itself fostering.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/feb/03/cut-to-disability-benefits-may-make-return-to-work-harder-claim-mps>

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[Green member of House of Lords seeks to 'abolish' herself](#)



Green Party

3 February 2017

*** Green peer seeks to transform House of Lords from within**

*** Jenny Jones: Lords reform is essential for proper scrutiny of Brexit process**

Jenny Jones, Green member of the House of Lords, will today (February 3) continue her fight to transform the unelected chamber.

Baroness Jones' House of Lords Reform Bill will get its second reading on Friday, with reform of the Lords more important now than ever to enable proper scrutiny of the Brexit process.

Baroness Jones hopes to gather support from within the Lords for her plans to replace the House of Lords with a democratic and effective second chamber. This would use proportional representation to elect a new house, but keep many existing peers as non-voting experts.

Her Bill is the first with this mix of proposals to come from within the Lords.

Jenny Jones said:

“I’m not the only Lord who wants to abolish their right to vote in the second chamber, but I’m aiming to be one of the most energetic peers in making it happen. I’m relatively new to the Lords and I hope my fresh approach will help fast track the various discussions about Lords reform.

“The referendum vote in favour of Brexit makes Lords reform both urgent and inevitable. The government could try to push through all kinds of bad ideas on the back of the Brexit negotiations, the Great Repeal Act and hasty trade deals.

“We need an effective and democratic chamber to help scrutinise the secondary legislation and the international deals.

“The Government may well give itself so-called Henry 8th powers to just unilaterally repeal or amend European laws after the Repeal Act passes, opening the door to a bonfire of environmental and social protections. We need a second chamber that has the legitimacy and popular backing to challenge the use of such anti-democratic powers.”

Notes:

1 <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldordpap.htm>

Jenny’s bill is the third on a list to be taken at 10am on Friday 3rd June. Nine peers in addition to Jenny have put their names down to speak so far.

House of Lords Reform Bill [HL] Second Reading [[Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb](#)]

If the bill is read a second time, [Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb](#) to move that the bill be committed to a Committee of the Whole House

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